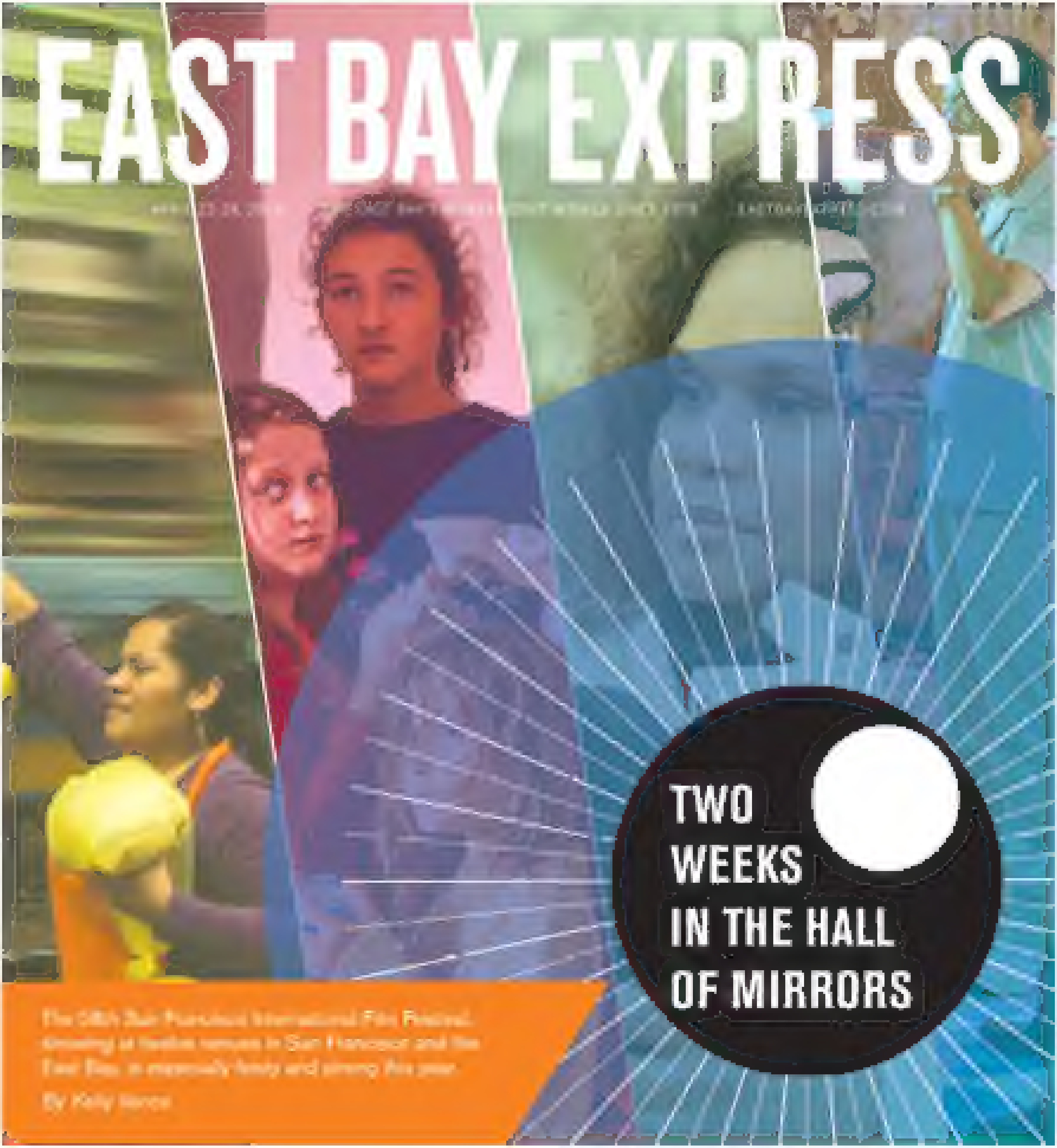
EAST BAY EXPRESS



TWO WEEKS IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS

The 58th San Francisco International Film Festival, showing at twelve venues in San Francisco and the East Bay, is especially lively and strong this year.

By Kelly Vance

CONTENTS

NEWS&OPINION

ARTS&CULTURE

FOOD&DRINK

MOVIES

MUSIC

EXTRAS

EAST BAY EXPRESS

EDITORIAL

BUSINESS

ADVERTISING

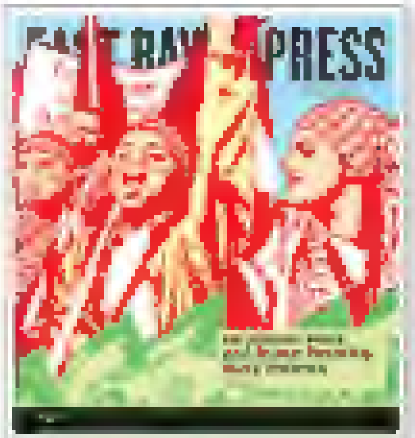
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NEWS&OPINION



LETTERS

Sounds Like San Francisco

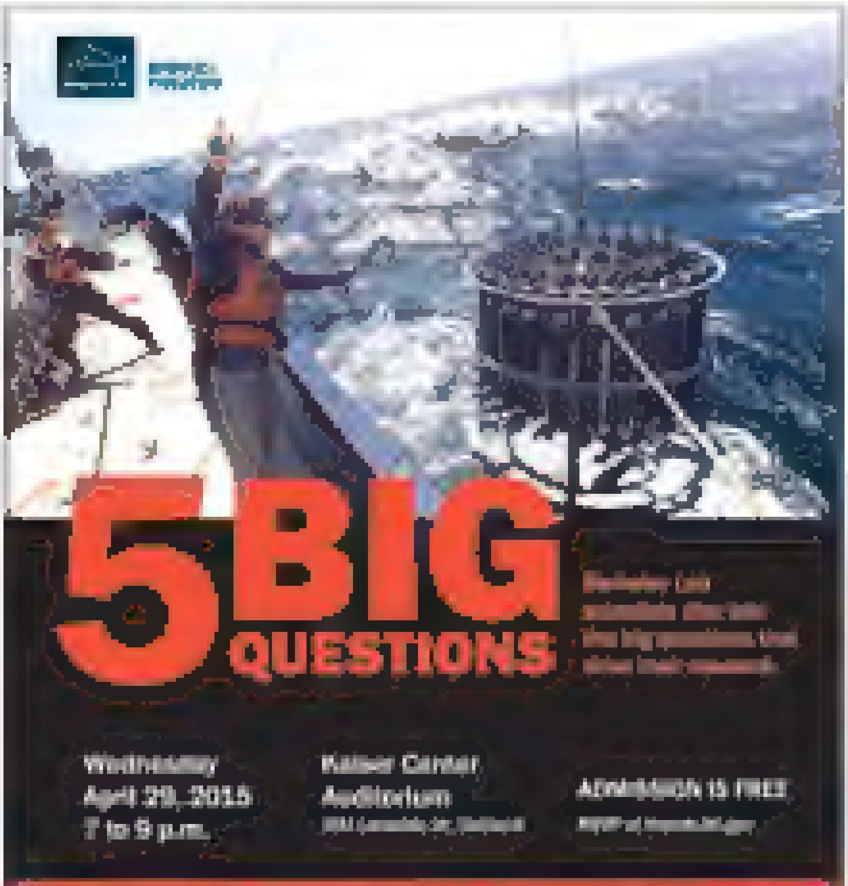
Oakland Needs the Money

Put Affordable Housing on Public Land

This is Bad Public Policy

Where Are We Going to Go?

End Prohibition Now,



California

Hopefully, California [illegible] are paying attention. Forcing the black market to regulate cannabis (marijuana) has proven to be one of the United States' worst policy failures in history. Forcing government to regulate the relatively safe, god-given plant is best for everyone.

Since Colorado re-legalized cannabis, nearly every negative prediction has proven false by nearly every measure. California voters will likely have the opportunity to completely re-legalize cannabis in 2016 and should not let that golden opportunity slip away. The negative consequences of cannabis prohibition cannot end soon enough.

Jim White, Dillon, Colorado

[illegible]

'We Need Squatters' Rights

If we had squatters' rights for taking over derelict and neglected property, we would have owners investing in maintaining them. Also, there would be an incentive for owners to collaborate with community agriculture groups. Cuba has been allowing anyone to farm unused and neglected land, and it works. Havana has some of the most productive urban ag on the planet.

Todd Jersey, Berkeley

If It Was Good Enough for Walgreens...

The city gave Walgreens a big lot on Broadway Avenue. It can give Afrika Town this empty lot that no luxury condo developer wants.

The owner of the empty lot is off the hook — trying to hold the garden hostage for a million.

[illegible], Oakland

Afrika Town Is Gentrification, Too

It kinda seems like appropriation of other people's property. As former journalist, I would ask if the development would add housing to one of tightest housing markets in the country? As in, why are people being displaced? Why is housing so unaffordable? And why don't we build enough? Also, won't the development contribute tax dollars to local schools and city programs?

It really seems like these individuals are engaging in a more "grassroots" type of gentrification but gentrification nevertheless. The title of this article shows the lack of balance reporting. The *Express* is just another Fox News — for left.

[illegible], Oakland

[illegible]

Nice Try, Mr. Almond Board

As someone who has been in [illegible] communications for nearly twenty years, I want to compliment Mr. Richard Waycott, CEO of the Almond Board of California, (and perhaps his communications staff) on the excellent reframing of the "facts" to serve his industry's interests.

As a former philosophy student, and in the interest of furthering knowledge, though, I'd like to point out a couple of his better efforts to misinform his audience. First, 80 percent and 82 percent are not significantly different numbers, so "less than 80 percent" of California almonds being exported is not a lot different materially from more than 80 percent. This communications technique is very similar to the common sales trick of lowering the price from [illegible] to [illegible]. Mr. Waycott is attempting to discredit his adversary by expressing hard outrage over small differences in data. (I suspect that for many readers and [illegible], who is eating the almonds is not even that much of an issue, anyway.)

His second scheme is more clever. Unless I'm mistaken Mr. Waycott flips the common use of words on their head in his attempt to refute that agriculture uses comprise nearly 80 percent of California water consumption. Mr. Waycott's "fact," "[E]nvironmental use takes up, on average, about half of all managed water." If I understand the term correctly, "environmental use" is the water that is not used by California water consumers, both business and residents, but instead allowed to be "used" by fish, rivers, streams, estuaries and bays. Thus, California is "managing" water when we allow only half of it to be consumed, mandate that half be allowed to flow into the environment, avoiding species extinctions and degradation of our rivers, estuaries, and bays.

It is Orwellian reclassification of the highest order to redefine preservation of this precious resource as "use" in order to deny that 80 percent of the half that is consumed goes to agriculture. Again, kudos to Mr. Waycott's communications staff.

I'm sympathetic to small family farmers, especially those who have been in a particular business for generations. Unfortunately, Mr. Waycott has hid among the [illegible] of his other "facts," and I'll need to look into them myself. I have a feeling that, even if "more than three-quarters of almond farms are 100 acres or less and more than 90 percent are family farms," the majority of almonds are produced by large agribusiness. We live in the age of the One Percenters, after all. It is not a stretch to imagine that 90 percent of the almond farms produce a relatively small percent of the almonds.

Thanks for the excellent article ["A Drop in the Bucket," 3/18], Mr. [illegible]

[illegible], San Pablo

Corrections

Our April 15 news story, "Fire on Fire," misspelled Andrew [illegible]'s first name. Also, our April 15 Sustainable Living story, "Growing a Better System," incorrectly referred to the Insight Garden Program as the Insight Prison Project.

Parker Owes City an Apology

A scathing new report largely blames the city attorney and her office for why the city has been unable to fire bad cops.

By Robert Gammon

Over the past decade, the Oakland Police Department has received much of the blame for its repeated failure to enact court-ordered reforms regarding police misconduct. But a hard-hitting report released last week revealed there is another city agency also responsible for why OPD has failed to live up to the reforms: the Oakland City Attorney's Office. In fact, the report, conducted by court-appointed investigator Edward Swanson, confirmed what the *Express* uncovered in an in-depth story last year, and serves as a stinging indictment of City Attorney Barbara Parker and her office's repeated failures to hold bad cops accountable.

Swanson's report, which was commissioned by federal Judge Thelton Henderson, singles out Parker and the ineptitude of her office as to why the city repeatedly loses arbitration cases involving police officer discipline, and has lost nine straight before Henderson ordered Swanson's review. According to Swanson's report, Parker's office:

• Has repeatedly failed to prepare for police arbitration cases, often waiting until just before a hearing to contact witnesses, and then has failed to prepare witnesses to testify. In one case, a deputy city attorney was so unprepared that the only witness she called to the stand was a former police chief whom she thought would testify on the city's behalf, but who, in fact, testified on behalf of the disciplined cop.

• Has repeatedly waited until the last minute to assign private attorneys to handle police misconduct cases, thereby giving those lawyers no time to prepare for arbitration. By contrast, police officers' union attorneys typically take months, and sometimes years, to get ready for cases.

• Has repeatedly failed to hire experienced private attorneys who are experts in police misconduct cases. In fact, Parker's system of hiring outside attorneys didn't even take into account whether lawyers had ever handled police misconduct cases before. In one instance, a firm was recommended for hiring because it had done real estate law for the city. Swanson said witnesses told him that the outside attorneys "had a crippling lack of knowledge about police discipline."

Since the revelation, Parker has repeatedly blamed staffing cuts in her office for why she can't assign deputy city attorneys to handle all police misconduct cases, and instead must often hire private lawyers. But Swanson pointed out that Parker's argument does not explain why she routinely waited until the last moment to assign cases to outside attorneys or why she failed to hire lawyers with expertise.

Swanson even called out Parker personally for a letter she wrote to the *Express* last year, demanding a correction to our cover story, "Why Oakland Can't Fire Bad Cops," (2/19). Our story, by investigative journalist Ali Winston, uncovered Parker's practice of not assigning cases until just before arbitration hearings. In her letter to the editor, Parker claimed that in a case involving the firing of Officer Robert Roche for misconduct, the "timing of the assignment was not a factor in the outcome of the case."

Swanson called Parker's claim "alarming" and wrong. He noted that the attorney Parker hired did not review the Roche case until about three weeks before the arbitration hearing, while Roche's attorneys had been preparing for months. Roche was the cop who lobbed a tear gas grenade at Occupy Oakland protesters who were trying to help injured Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen. The arbitrator ultimately ruled in Roche's favor and ordered OPD to rehire him with back pay — a move that shocked many Oakland residents and prompted Judge Henderson's decision to appoint Swanson. "Having reviewed the transcript of the hearing and having spoken to many individuals involved in the case, we can say categorically that this mismatch in preparation [between the attorney Parker hired and Roche's lawyers] had an effect on the outcome," Swanson concluded.

"The issue is not how good a job the union did in defending its members," civil rights attorney Jim Chanin, told the *Express*, referring to Swanson's conclusions about police arbitrations cases. "The issue is: Why hasn't the city done its job?"

In response to Swanson's report, Parker issued a formal statement: "As City Attorney, I am responsible for the performance of the [Oakland City Attorney's Office], good or bad, and as we reported to the Court, I have taken steps to address the concerns that we identified regarding the handling of certain police arbitrations." Parker further stated that her office now seeks out qualified attorneys for police misconduct cases and assigns them well in advance of arbitrations. She also said her office now has a dedicated unit that oversees police misconduct cases.

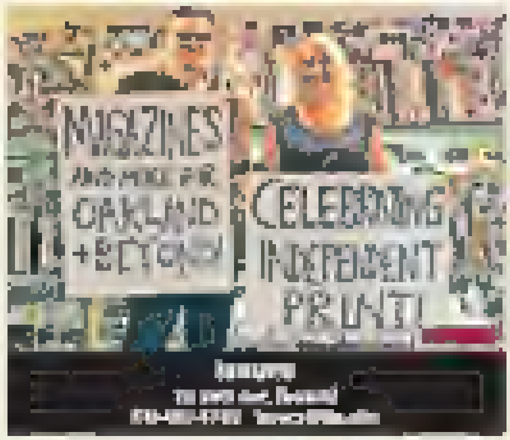
Swanson credited Parker for making the changes, and noted that, as a result, her office recently won two police arbitration cases. But he also concluded that she would not have instituted the reforms if Judge Henderson had not ordered his report.

And he's right. Parker's letter to the *Express* last September showed that she was in denial about the failures of her office. But more troubling, Swanson's report proves that her office has helped foster a culture within OPD in which bad cops know that they can get away with just about anything. And for that, she owes the residents of this city an apology. ◆

Think indie













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Tastings for Medical Pot Take Flight

By David Downs



The Burn After the Fire

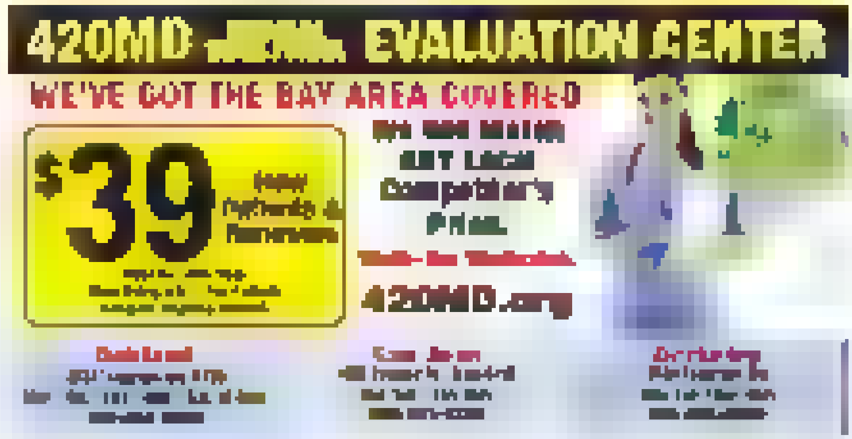
After a deadly fire erupted in a live-work building on 26th Street, city officials say the landlord has failed to take basic steps to rehab people's homes, and tenants worry that they may be permanently displaced.

By Sam Levin




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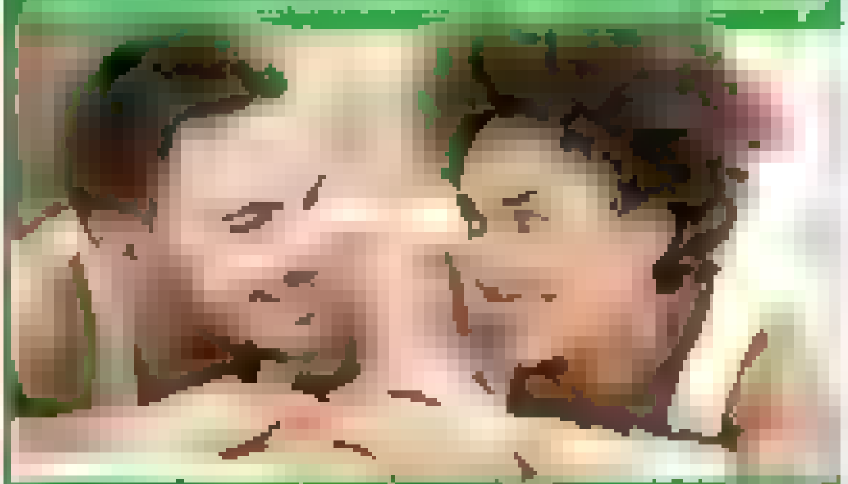

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Apartment Tower Deal May Be Illegal

The proposed sale of public land for the construction of a luxury apartment tower appears to violate state and City of Oakland laws that prioritize affordable housing.

By Darwin BondGraham



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[illegible]

10 Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship*

- Checking your cell phone or email without permission
- Constantly putting you down
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Explosive temper
- Isolating you from family or friends
- Making false accusations
- Mood swings
- Physically hurting you in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling you what to do

*These warning signs are provided by loveisrespect.org. Discuss your options anonymously by sending the text "loveis" to 22522.

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WELLNESS







TWO WEEKS IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS


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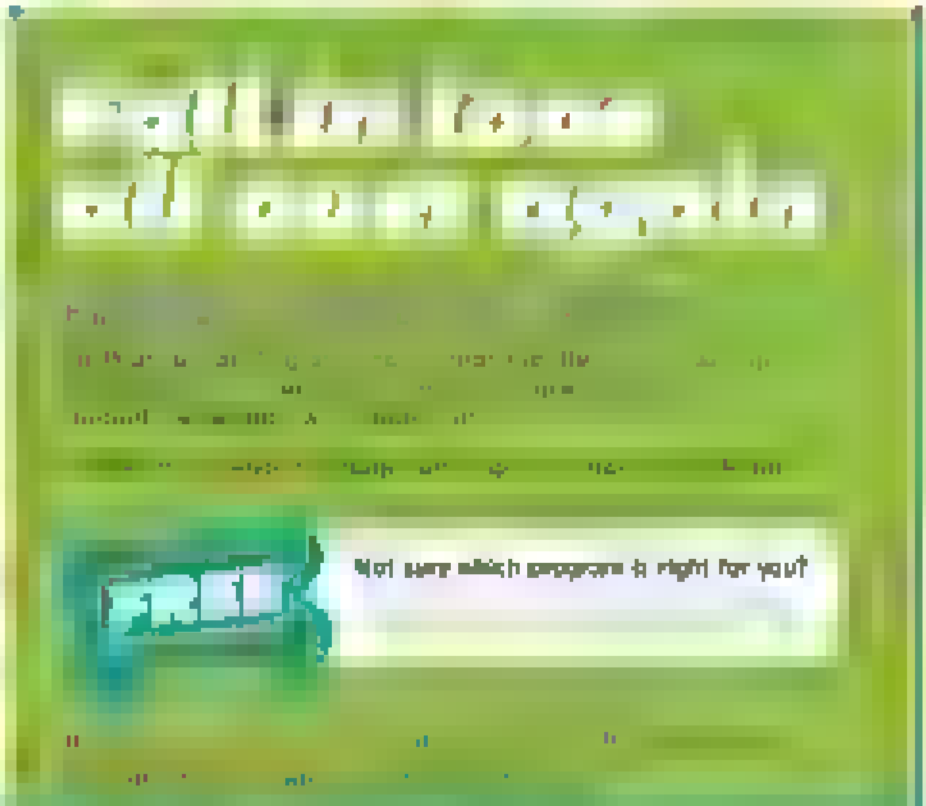

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Learn about your local options at the
REPAIR FAIR
Sunday, May 17 ● 1–4pm ● 401 26th St. Oakland
EAST BAY EXPRESS




What you'll learn

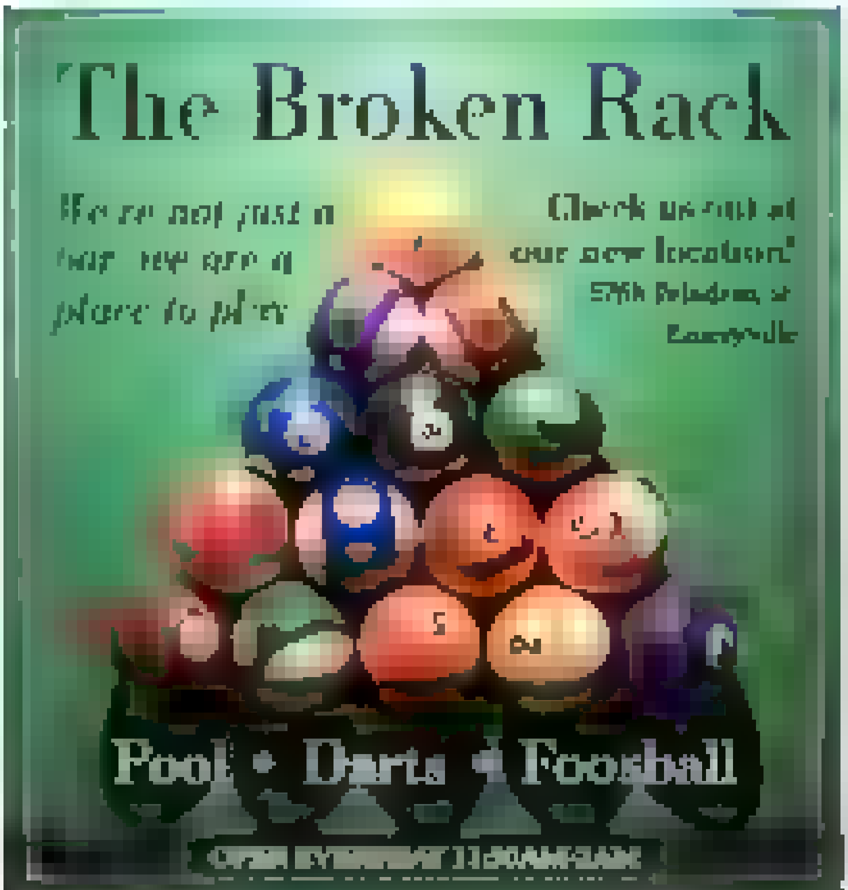



Happy
Hound


FREE
Not sure which program is right for you?


Everyone
deserves
a bra that
fits



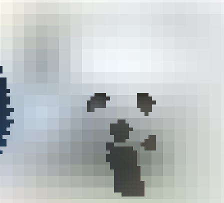
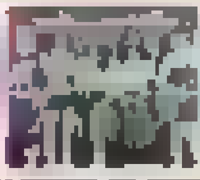

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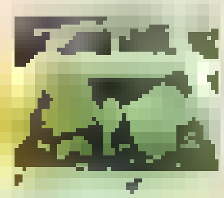
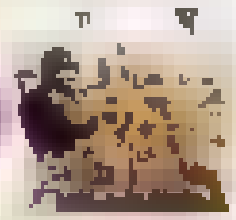














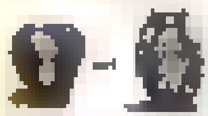






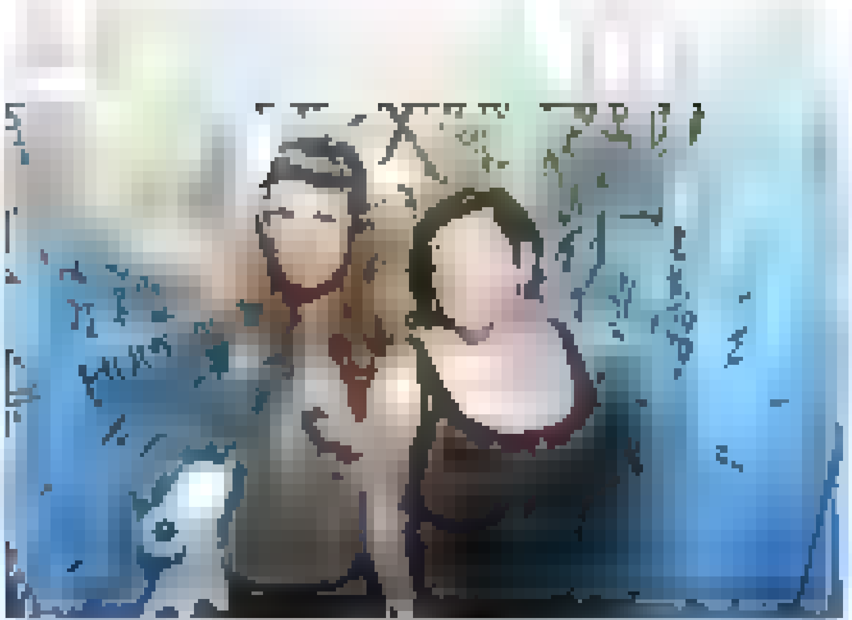










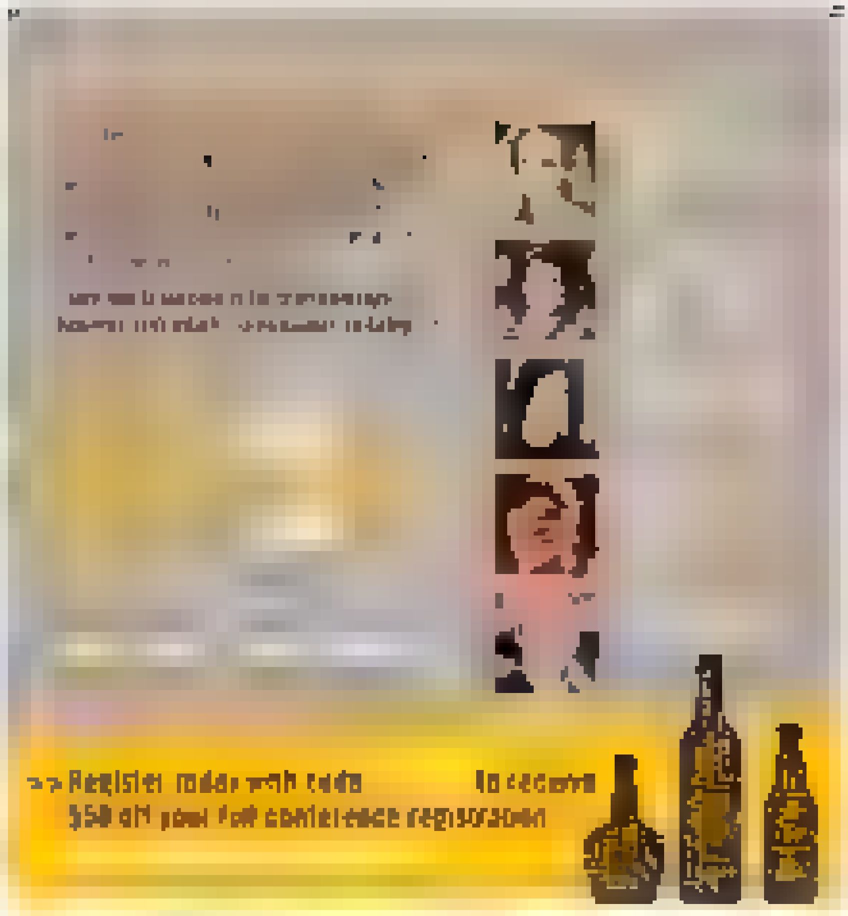
There Goes the Gayborhood

As San Francisco's last lesbian bar, the Lexington Club, is set to close this month, a group of filmmakers, storytellers, and artists are trying to preserve its memory.

By Anna Pulley

Event Details


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OFF THE GRID
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Post-Painting Mechanics

By Sarah Burke



100th Cky



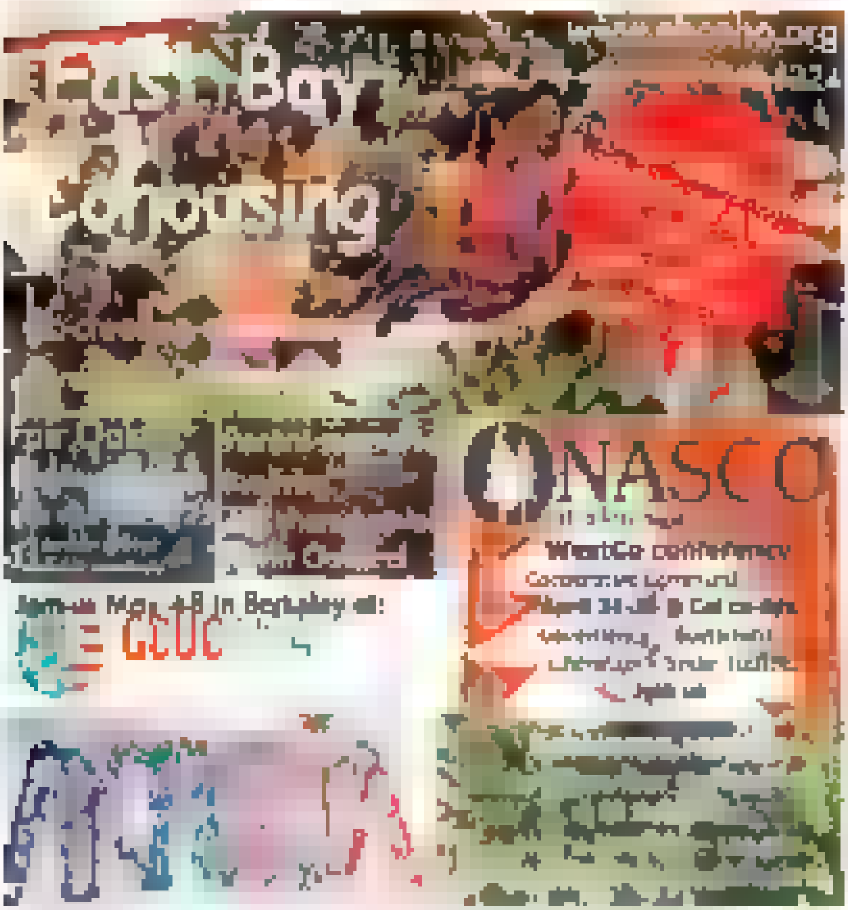
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More Listings Online



Let's Dance

For Bay Area Dance Week, companies and studios across the Bay Area are throwing open their doors and asking the community to join in.

By Sarah Burke

Antigenick



More Listings Online

Dirty Old Women

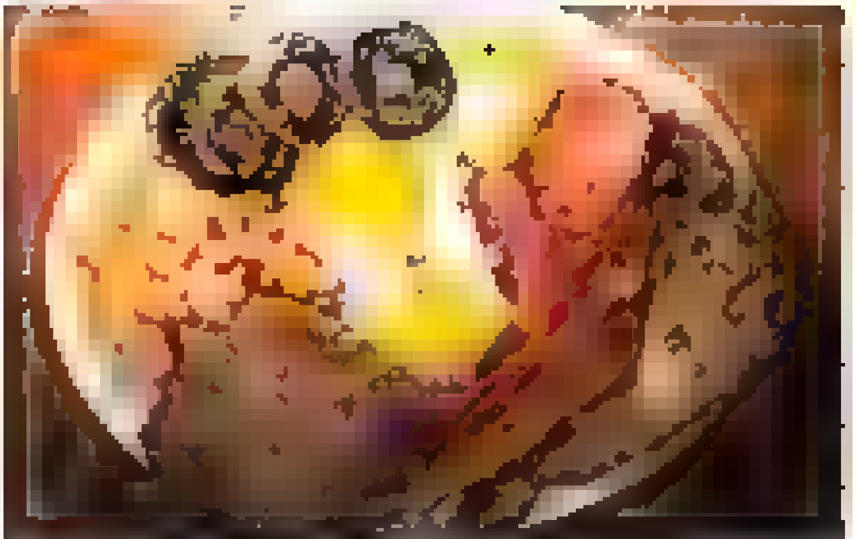


Ask Mr. Dad

Babies can sometimes bring out the worst in us

By Armin Brott





Good Pubs Come in Small Packages

CommonWealth Micropub is a tiny bar with broad appeal — and not just for Anglophiles.

By Luke Tsai

CommonWealth Micropub

Sample Menu




TIKKA
MASALA
FRIED
CHICKEN


DRAKES BREWING
BARREL HOUSE
TAP ROOM ... RETAIL SALES
OPEN AT NOON DAILY
Brew


SESSION
5pm at Jack London Square Oakland
May the tyranny of the Imperial Ales be cast down.
EAST BAY EXPRESS

Veg Week Shifts Its Focus

Plus, Hi-Life reorganizes in the wake of controversy.

By Luke Tsai

Hi-Life Hopes for Clean Slate


black slate!
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Buy one
Mummers Mix
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Shrimp & Grits
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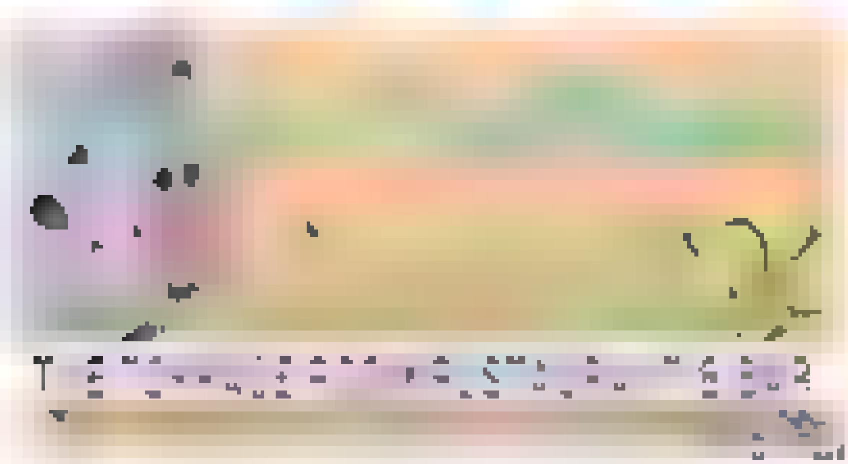
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True Story

Black Souls

Showtimes Online





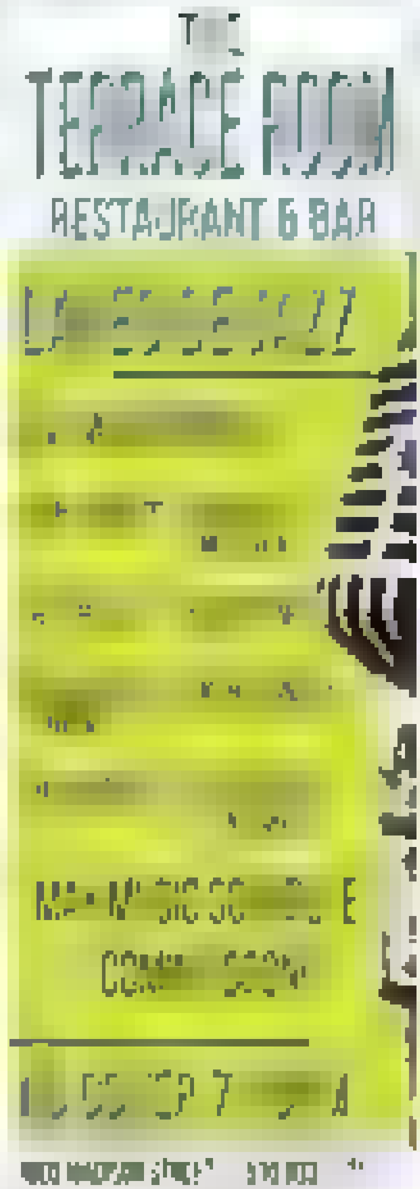


ONE-NIGHT STANDS

West Oakland's Lingering Blues









Try On

Heiko Schwegel, the recently deceased local musician, songwriter, and nightlife fixture, is remembered as a quintessential East Bay punk.

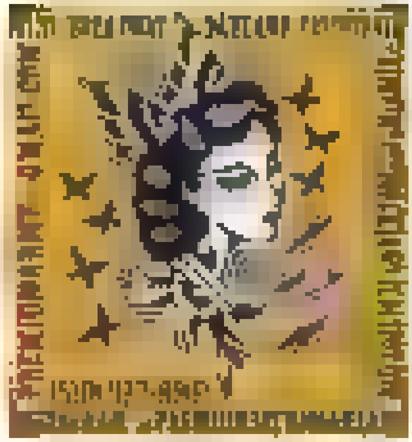
By Sam Lefebvre



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THURSDAY 23

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

FRIDAY 24

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

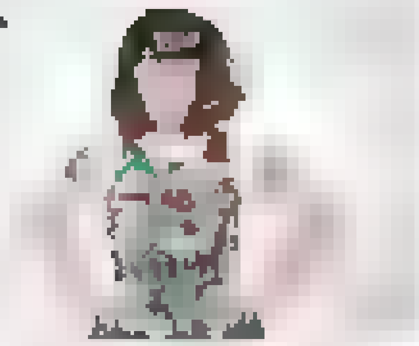
World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop



The Clerical

SATURDAY 25

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

SUNDAY 26

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Gospel & Vocal

VENUE DIRECTORY EAST BAY

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

MONDAY 27

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

TUESDAY 28

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

WEDNESDAY 29

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

THURSDAY 23

FRIDAY 24

SATURDAY 25

SUNDAY 26

MONDAY 27

TUESDAY 28

WEDNESDAY 29

Mac Dre Art Show



Free Will Astrology

Horoscopes for the week of April 22-28

By Rob Brezsny



Aries (March 21–April 19): If you're stumped about what present to give someone for a special occasion, you might buy him or her a gift card. The problem is, a lot of people neglect to redeem their gift cards. They leave them in drawers and forget about them. Financial experts say there are currently billions of dollars going to waste on unredeemed gift cards. This is your metaphor of the moment, Aries. Are there any resources you're not using? Any advantages you're not capitalizing on? Any assets you're ignoring? If so, fix the problem.

Taurus (April 20–May 20): I usually have no objection to your devoted oneness (I won't use the phrase "manic obsession") with security and comfort. But there are rare phases in every Taurus' life cycle when pinched stability becomes a liability. Cruising along in a smooth groove threatens to devolve into slouching along in a gutless rut. Now is such a phase. At this moment, it is healthy for you to seek out splashes of unpredictability. Wisdom is most likely to grow from uncertainty. Joy will emerge from an eagerness to traverse the unknown.

Gemini (May 21–June 20): There may be a flood-like event that will wash away worn-out stuff that you don't need any more. There might be an earthquake-type phenomenon that only you can feel, and it might demolish one of your rotten obstacles. There could be a lucky accident that will knock you off the wrong course (which you might have thought was the right course). All in all, I suspect it will be a very successful week for benevolent forces beyond your control. How much skill do you have in the holy art of surrender?

Cancer (June 21–July 22): What is your biggest wound? Or rather, what is your stickiest, stuckest, most debilitating wound? We all have one; a reason we tell ourselves about why it's difficult to live up to our potential; a presumed barrier that we regard as so deeply rooted that we will never be able to break its spell on us. Maybe it's a traumatic memory. Maybe it's a physical imperfection or a chronic fear. In accordance with the current astrological omens, Cancerian, you'd be wise to do an audit and reassessment of your own barrier wound. I suspect you now have insight about it that you've never had before. I also think you have more power than usual to at least partially dismantle it.

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22): If you were a supporting character in a popular TV drama, the producers would be cooking up a spin-off show with you in a starring role. If you were in an indie rock band, you'd be ready to move from performing at 300-seat venues to clubs with an audience capacity of 2,000. If you have always been just an average apprentice romantic like the rest of us, you might be on the verge of becoming a legend in your own mind — in which case it would be time to start selling T-shirts, mugs, and calendars with your image on them. And even if you are none of the above, Leo, I suspect you're ready to rise to the next level.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): Free at last! Free at last! Thanks to the Lord of the Universe or the *Flying Spaghetti Monster* or a burst of crazy good luck, you are free at last! You are free from the burden that made you say things you didn't mean! You are free from the seductive temptation to rent, lease, or even sell your soul! Best of all, you are free from the mean little voice in your head — you know, the superstitious perfectionist that whispers weird advice based on fearful delusions! So now what will you do, my dear? You have escaped from the cramped, constricted conditions. Maybe you can escape to wide-open spaces that will unleash the hidden powers of your imagination.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): "To me, there is no greater act of courage than being the one who kisses first," says Libra actress and activist Janeane Garofalo. I can think of other ways to measure bravery, but for your immediate future, her definition will serve just fine. Your ultimate test will be to freely give your tenderness and compassion and empathy — without any preconditions or expectations. For the sake of your own integrity and mental health, be steadfast in your intention to always strike the first blow for peace, love, and understanding.

Scorpio (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): It will soon be that time when you are halfway between your last birthday and your next birthday. I invite you to make this a special occasion. Maybe you can call it your anti-birthday or unbirthday. How to celebrate? Here are some ideas: 1. Imagine who you would be if you were the opposite of yourself. 2. Write a list of all the qualities you don't possess and the things you don't need and the life you don't want to live. 3. Try to see the world through the eyes of people who are unlike you. 4. Extend a warm welcome to the shadowy, wedgy, marginal parts of your psyche that you have a hard time accepting, let alone loving. 5. Any other ways you can think of to celebrate your anti-birthday?

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): As I climb the first hill along my regular hike, a plant with plump, three-lobed leaves dominates both sides of the path. The leaves are so exuberant and cheerful, I'm tempted to caress them, even rub my face in their bright greenery. But I refrain, because they are poison oak. One touch would cause my skin to break out in an inflamed rash that would last for days. I encourage you, too, to forgo contact with any influence in your own sphere that is metaphorically equivalent to the alluring leaves of the poison oak.

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): Today, the French Capricorn painter Henri Matisse (1869–1954) is regarded as a foremost pioneer of modern art. Some critics say his innovative influence on painting nearly matched Picasso's. But during the first part of the 20th century, his work often provoked controversy. When a few of his paintings appeared at a major exhibition in Chicago, for example, local art students were shocked by what they called his freakishness. They held a mock trial, convicted Matisse of artistic crimes, and burned his painting *Blue Nude* in effigy. I don't expect that you will face reactions quite as extreme as that in the coming weeks, Capricorn. But it will make sense to express yourself with such forceful creativity and originality that you risk inciting strong responses.

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): Leonardo da Vinci had skills in many fields, ranging from botany to engineering to cartography, but he is best known as a painter. And yet in his 67 years on the planet, he finished fewer than forty paintings. He worked at a very gradual pace. The Mona Lisa took him fourteen years! That's the kind of deliberate approach I'd like to see you experiment with in the coming weeks, Aquarius. Just for a while, see what it's like to turn down your levels of speed and intensity. Have you heard of the Slow Food Movement? Have you read Carl Honoré's book *In Praise of Slowness*? Do you know about Slow Travel, Slow Media, and Slow Fashion?

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20): Modern movies don't skimp on the use of the f-bomb. Actors in *The Wolf of Wall Street* spit it out 569 times. The word-that-rhymes-with-duck was heard 326 times in *End of Watch*, while *Brooklyn's Finest* racked up 271 and *This Is the End* erupted with 200 more. But this colorful word hasn't always been so prominent a feature. Before 1967, no actor had ever uttered it on-screen. That year, Marianne Faithfull let it fly in the film *I'll Never Forget What's'isname*. In the coming weeks, Pisces, I invite you to break a taboo that's maybe not as monumental as Faithfull's upstream leap, but still fabulously fun and energizing. Be a liberator! End the superstition! Unleash the blocked vitality!

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Virgin Territory

On taking a man's virginity, public erections, and Master/slave relationships.

By Dan Savage

I'm an American woman living abroad and have started a relationship with a wonderful man from a Middle Eastern country. We are having a great time exploring what is a foreign country for both of us. The looming issue is sex, of course. He is a moderate Muslim, but he grew up in a strict conservative family and country. He's 29 and has never even held hands with a woman. He is excited to change this now that he has broken away from his family. I have had many partners, both men and women, and am quite sexually experienced. I am curious about what to do when the time comes. Do you have advice on how to best go about taking a man's virginity? I want to avoid as much insecurity on his part as I can.

Going To Be His First

Be gentle, GTBHF. Also, make it clear beforehand that you're his girlfriend and not his counselor or spiritual advisor. If he's still struggling with the sex-negative, woman-phobic crap that his upbringing (and a sectarian version of his faith) put in his head, he needs to work through that crap before he gets naked with you. He may have some sort of post-climax meltdown or [illegible] — like the ones so many repressed gay dudes have the first time they have sex with a man — and you'll be kind and understanding, of course, but you won't allow him to lay responsibility for the choice he made on you. As for the sex itself: Take the pressure off him by letting him know that this — his first time, your first time together — is about pleasure and connecting, not about performance and mastery. Let him know that you don't expect him to know what he's doing at every moment, that a little fumbling and adjusting are normal even with more experienced folks, and that you're both allowed to stop the action, talk about whatever's going on, and then start again.

And finally, GTBHF, let him know that you're going to take the lead and reassure him that there's nothing emasculating about being with — and being led by — a sexually empowered woman. Quite the opposite: A truly masculine straight man isn't afraid of a woman who knows what she's doing and what she wants.

I am a 35-year-old man, and I sometimes get unbidden erections in public. They aren't glaringly obvious unless maybe I'm wearing a swimsuit at the pool, but of course, regardless of the situation, I feel like everyone can see it. I've heard people say it's rude or could even be perceived as predatory to sport a visible woody under your clothes in public. There are countless websites devoted to shaming men with boners in public, and that doesn't help the situation. Despite being mortified, deep down I want to believe that it should be okay to go about my business as long as I'm not being creepy. Is it okay to just go about my business until my hard-on subsides?

Bothered Over Natural Erectile [illegible]

The only people who'll notice (or linger over) your unbidden erections are the ones staring at your crotch — and they're the creeps, BONER, not you. So go about your business ... unless you're at the pool, in which case find an open poolside lounger and lie on your stomach until the crisis passes.

I'm in a BDSM-centered relationship with my Master/boyfriend and wear his collar. We have a tumultuous relationship and argue often. The cause of these arguments seems to be that I see myself as a strong female used to control of many aspects of my life, and he'd rather have me just go along with whatever he says. I like some BDSM play in the bedroom, but he wants me in submission to him 24/7. I've wanted breast augmentation for many years. He joined me at the first consult and was talking about the smallest implants possible. I have a small chest, and he is attracted to small chests, but I knew I wanted something more substantial — especially since I am paying for it and it's my body. I ended up going bigger than what he wanted without telling him, and he's expressed anger about what I did to "his body" (he believes he owns my body) without his consent. I couldn't be happier with my boobs. He hates them. Now I just don't know about my boyfriend. I love him, but I feel like he can't remove himself from decisions I make for myself.

Tits In Trouble

Your Master/boyfriend wants a slave girlfriend — he wants (and wants to think he's in) a total power exchange relationship. But you want a guy who's your equal out of the bedroom (and can't dictate implant sizes to you because it's not "his body," it's yours) and a fun BDSM play-partner/Master in the bedroom. You two need to have an out-of-role conversation/negotiation about your interests in kink, and your limits and his expectations — and if you can't get on the same page (if he can't dial it way back), you'll have to end things.

Find the Savage Lovecast (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at Savagelovecast.com. mail@savagelove.net

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